

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6841
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 0378

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y P A R A S I X

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, SF, WA
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: SOUTH AFRICA EXPLOITS NUJOMA STATEMENT

1. SUMMARY: SOUTH AFRICA HAS LEAPED AT THE OPPORTUNITY TO CAPITALIZE ON THE PUBLIC RELATIONS ADVANTAGE PROVIDED BY SAM NUJOMA'S REPORTED COMMENT IN A SABC-TELEVISION INTERVIEW SCREENED HERE FEB. 26 THAT "MAJORITY RULE IS OUT" FOR NAMIBIA. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, AN EARLY AND PROMINENT REITERATION OF OUR COMMITMENT TO FREE AND IMPARTIAL ELECTIONS WOULD BE USEFUL. END SUMMARY.

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2. AN EXCERPT FROM SABC JOURNALIST CLIFF SAUNDER'S TV INTERVIEW CONTAINING NUJOMA'S REJECTION OF MAJORITY RULE IN NAMIBIA WAS CARRIED ON SABC-TV SUNDAY NIGHT, FEB. 26. NUJOMA SAID: "WELL, THE QUESTION OF BLACK MAJORITY RULE IS OUT. WE ARE NOT FIGHTING EVEN FOR MAJORITY RULE. WE ARE FIGHTING TO SEIZE POWER IN NAMIBIA...FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE NAMIBIAN PEOPLE. WE ARE REVOLUTIONARIES. WE ARE NOT COUNTER REVOLUTIONARIES YOU

CAN TALK TO KAPUUNO OR KERINA AND ALL THOSE REACTIONARIES ABOUT MAJORITY RULE BUT NOT TO SWAPO." THESE REMARKS RECEIVED PROMINENT PLAY IN THE PRESS YESTERDAY (FEB. 27) AND BOTH THE PRIME MINISTER AND ADMINISTRATOR-GENERAL STEYN HAVE EXPRESSED INDIGNATION AND SHOCK.

3. IN A STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT REPORTED IN THE PRESS TODAY (FEB. 28), VORSTER SAID THAT "NUJOMA HAS LET THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG AND HE HAS NOW CONFIRMED WHAT WE HAVE ALWAYS SUSPECTED AND WHAT WE HAVE ACCUSED SWAPO OF. HE HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE IS NOT REALLY INTERESTED IN THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE, BUT ONLY IN SWAPO'S REVOLUTIONARY DOCTRINES FOR THE SAKE OF POWER OVER THE TERRITORY AND ITS PEOPLE."

4. VORSTER CONCLUDED WITH THE INJUNCTION THAT, "NOW THAT NUJOMA HAS SPOKEN, THE WESTERN POWERS MUST OBVIOUSLY REPLY. UNTIL SUCH REPLY IS RECEIVED, I AM NOT PREPARED TO COMMENT FURTHER."

5. IN HIS STATEMENT CARRIED ON RADIO AND TV, THE ADMINISTRATOR-GENERAL CALLED ON SWAPO TO CLARIFY THE COMMENT BY NUJOMA. THE ADMINISTRATOR-GENERAL SUGGESTED THAT NUJOMA'S COMMENT RAISED SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT SWAPO'S WILLINGNESS TO TAKE PART IN A DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. THE LEADER OF THE UK CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS, LORD CARRINGTON, WHO IS CURRENTLY VISITING SOUTH AFRICA, WAS ALSO QUOTED IN THE PRESS AND IN A TV INTERVIEW AS SAYING "IT WAS DISHEARTENING TO HEAR NUJOMA'S VIEW
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THAT MIGHT WAS RIGHT AND THAT SWAPO WAS NOT INTERESTED IN ONE MAN, ONE VOTE." LORD CARRINGTON SPOKE AFTER A 30-MINUTE MEETING ON RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA WITH VORSTER. NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS HAVE ALSO SEIZED UPON NUJOMA'S STATEMENT AS EVIDENCE THAT SWAPO IS NOT INTERESTED IN FREE ELECTIONS. THE CAPE TIMES FEB. 28, FOR EXAMPLE, SUGGESTED THAT THE REMARKS SHOULD BE A NEW SPUR TO FINDING A WESTERN-BACKED SETTLEMENT. WHEN SWAPO REJECTED THE SETTLEMENT, SOUTH AFRICA, THE PAPER SAID, WOULD THEN HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO EXPECT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO DISOWN SWAPO, AT LEAST A SWAPO LED BY NUJOMA, AND TO BACK WHATEVER GOVERNMENT MIGHT RESULT FROM ONE MAN, ONE VOTE ELECTIONS.

6. COMMENT: SAUNDER'S INTERVIEW OF NUJOMA, IT WOULD APPEAR, WAS CONDUCTED IN NEW YORK AT THE TIME OF THE PROXIMITY TALKS. SO THE SOUTH AFRICANS WERE IN POSSESSION OF THE SWAPO LEADER'S EXTRAORDINARY ASSERTIONS NEARLY TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THEIR RELEASE HERE. TIMING OF RELEASE FITS NEATLY INTO THE BUILD-UP BY THE SOUTH AFRICANS SINCE THE NEW YORK MEETINGS OF AN IMAGE OF THEIR FLEXIBILITY AND FORTHCOMING REASONABLENESS ON NAMIBIA IN CONTRAST TO A PICTURE OF SWAPO RIGIDITY.

7. COMMENTING ON NUJOMA'S REMARKS WILL POSE DIFFICULTIES FOR

THE FIVE. WE DO NOT WANT TO GET INTO THE BUSINESS OF CONFRONTING HIM OR SPECULATING ON HIS MEANING OR PURPOSES. I THINK ABOUT ALL WE CAN OR SHOULD SAY IS (1) THAT WE DO NOT KNOW THE PRECISE CONTEXT IN WHICH NUJOMA MADE HIS STATEMENT AND THEREFORE WE CANNOT INTERPRET WHAT HE INTENDED TO CONVEY OR ACHIEVE, BUT (2) THAT THE GOAL OF THE CONTACT GROUP REMAINS FREE AND IMPARTIAL ELECTIONS WHICH WILL ALLOW THE PEOPLE OF NAMIBIA TO DETERMINE THEIR OWN FUTURE. SUCH REACTION BY THE FIVE WOULD BE HELPFUL HERE IN UNDERSCORING THE EVEN-HANDED STEADFASTNESS OF OUR COMMITMENT. DON MCHENRY'S COMMENTS ALONG THIS LINE LAST WEEK HAVE BEEN WIDELY AND FAVORABLY REPORTED IN SOUTH AFRICA, INCLUDING YESTERDAY'S SABC COMMENTARY WHICH TERMED HIS REMARKS "HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT" (JOHANNESBURG 0491). WITHOUT PUTTING US IN THE POSITION OF ARGUING DIRECTLY WITH NUJOMA, SUCH OBLIQUE RE-CONFIDENTIAL

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JECTION OF HIS REMARKS WOULD ENCOURAGE FURTHER THE IMPRESSION WE SEE GENERATING HERE THAT THE CONTACT GROUP AND SOUTH AFRICA ARE REALLY NOT FAR APART ON THE ELEMENTS OF A SETTLEMENT FOR NAMIBIA. SUCH A CLARIFICATION BY THE FIVE COULD HELP HEAD OFF SAG USE OF NUJOMA STATEMENT AS RETIONALIZATION FOR PROCEEDING UNILATERALLY AND IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT FOR SAG JUSTIFICATION OF POSITIVE ACTION ON THE WESTERN PROPOSAL SHOULD IT WISH TO MOVE IN THAT DIRECTION.
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